



Springfield-Greene County
Health Department
Helping people live longer, healthier, happier lives

*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 8-8-06*****

From the Office of the Director of Health

Tobacco Sting Results in Perfect Score

For the first time in ten years, businesses in Springfield receive a perfect score in tobacco compliance inspections.

Each year the Springfield-Greene County Health Department performs inspections of randomly selected local businesses to check for compliance with city and state laws, which prohibit sales of tobacco products to minors. The health department first started using teenagers to perform inspection in 1996. In 1996 1 in 3 establishments sold tobacco products to the minors. Ten years later, none of the businesses inspected sold to minors.

Health Department Program Representative, Dane Brandwein attributes the improvement in compliance rates with an aggressive education program implemented in 1996. "I go into businesses and explain the law. I educate business owners and employees on the importance of complying with the city ordinance," says Brandwein. "Most of them are parents, too, and seem genuinely concerned."

The health department recognizes that tobacco product sales and use by minors promotes the development of smoking related diseases later in life.

- Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable illness and death in the U.S.
- The majority of smokers begin their addiction to tobacco in adolescence.
- Youth who begin smoking before their 18th birthday are more likely to continue throughout adulthood.
- If current national rates continue, more than 5 million children currently under the age of 18 will eventually die from a smoking related disease.

For more information, contact:

Kevin Gipson, Director of Health 864-1657

###